



Lamont, C. (2021) Stewart & Meikle's *The Poetical Miscellany* (1800): a problematic Glasgow 'edition' of Robert Burns. *Burns Chronicle*, 130(1), pp. 59-70.

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Deposited on: 22 September 2021

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STEWART & MEIKLE'S *THE POETICAL MISCELLANY* (1800): A PROBLEMATIC GLASGOW 'EDITION' OF ROBERT BURNS

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In the landscape of Robert Burns's bibliography it is well known that the title of his debut edition, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Kilmarnock: 1786), was reused for subsequent iterations of his work well beyond his death. New editions bearing this title appeared regularly throughout Britain and North America until around 1824. For all this marketing opportunism in Burns's lifetime and beyond, no Glasgow publisher had put together a comprehensive edition of poems until Thomas Stewart's *Poems Ascribed to Robert Burns, the Ayrshire Bard* appeared in 1801. In the same year Thomas Duncan and the partners Chapman and Lang each published their own Glasgow editions under that original title *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*. But the story of Burns's works printed in Glasgow is better told in looking at the spate of chapbooks that were printed and sold cheaply, in the 1790s and early 1800s.¹

The best known collection is Brash and Reid's *Poetry; Original and Selected*, appearing in four volumes of 24 pamphlets each, including works by many hands. Of the 96 total numbers, 18 of them contain Burns material.² In Egerer's bibliographical survey he declares these pamphlets as scarce but essential for any good Glasgow library.³ According to Iain Beavan this collection was produced by Robert Chapman, of the same Chapman and Lang, above, who printed Burns's poems in 1801.⁴ While most of the pamphlets bear the same colophon – 'Glasgow: Printed for and Sold by Brash & Reid' – the names Chapman and Lang do appear on a variant issue of *Alloway Kirk; or Tam O' Shanter. A Tale. (1796)*.⁵ The scope of these variants was laid out by G. Ross Roy in 1989 with illustrations showing the different rules, designs, and, in one case, the misspelling of 'Alloway' as 'Aloway'.⁶ Another copy with the 'Aloway' title-page was since acquired by the Roy Collection at the University of South Carolina.

It is another collection which is the focus of this essay. In 1796 the partners Stewart and Meikle commenced the publication of what would become a total of eight chapbooks, beginning with *An Unco Mournfu Tale* [1]. One half of this partnership was the same Thomas Stewart who went on to publish *Poems Ascribed to Robert Burns* (1801) and the controversial *Letters Addressed to Clarinda* (1802). After a few years the names Stewart and Meikle became synonymous with Burns chapbooks, and on 13 July 1799 they published *The Jolly Beggars: a Cantata* [2]. This was the first instance of Burns's famous tale in print, though it lacked the 'Merry Andrew' episode, first printed in Duncan's edition of *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Glasgow: 1801).⁷ Thereafter, for each of the following six weeks until 7 September, they published *The Kirk's Alarm* [3], *Holy Willie's Prayer* [4], *Extempore Verses on Dining with Lord Daer* [5], *The Inventory* [6], *The Henpeck'd Huband* [7], and *The Passage of Mount St. Gothard*

¹ The main findings of this essay were fed into the present author's *Bibliography of Robert Burns for the 21st Century: 1786-1802* (Glasgow: Centre for Robert Burns Studies, 2017; 2018):

https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_518307_smxx.pdf. The study was conducted under the auspices of the AHRC-funded project 'Editing Robert Burns for the 21st Century' (PI: Prof Gerard Carruthers).

² J. C. Ewing, *Brash and Reid: Booksellers in Glasgow, and their collection of Poetry, Original and Selected* (Glasgow: Robert Maclehose, 1934), and in *Records of the Glasgow Bibliographical Society*, 21 (1936): 1-20.

³ J. W. Egerer, *A Bibliography of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd, 1964), 55.

⁴ Iain Beavan, 'The Decline and Fall of the Scottish Chapbook', *Street Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century: Producers, Sellers, Consumers* eds. David Atkinson and Steven Roud (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 154-93 (171-2).

⁵ Elizabeth Sudduth, *The G. Ross Roy Collection of Robert Burns: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 31.

⁶ G. Ross Roy, 'The Brash and Reid Editions of "Tam o' Shanter"', *Burns Chronicle* 1989, 38-44.

⁷ Egerer, 85; cf. pp. 251-61 of Duncan's 1801 edition.

[8], each containing some original Burns material. Then, in 1800, a new 'edition' of Burns poems titled *The Poetical Miscellany* was published in Glasgow. A note 'To the Public' was bound inside:

The Editors beg leave to present the Public with a small volume, which they have spared neither trouble nor expence to render worthy of acceptance.

Of the *merit* of this MISCELLANY, nothing more need be said, than that it chiefly consists of posthumous pieces, by *Robert Burns*, the justly celebrated Ayrshire bard; whose memory will be cherished, while the efforts of vigorous genius, and the simple graces of nature, are objects of admiration. A number of these pieces were never published before, and in every one of them, the peculiar manner of the author will be readily recognized by his admirers.

Among the original productions of Burns, the editors cannot avoid a particular notice of the JOLLY BEGGARS, which, of itself, is sufficient to give celebrity to any collection. The pleasing variety of recitative and songs, affording specimens of almost every measure of verse; the appropriate humour of the respective characters; the natural description of the manners and enjoyments of "the wandering train;" and the simplicity of the ancient Scottish dialect which it displays, rank it among the foremost sallies of our favourite Poet.

To those who may object to any appearance of unguarded levity in some of these productions of Burns, the Editors must plead the extreme avidity with which every relic of him is sought after; and the numerous solicitations which they have received to publish the pieces alluded to, "with all their imperfections on their head."

There are also, in the following Miscellany, a few original productions, by gentlemen of this city, which, it is hoped, will be found to possess merit sufficient to excite a wish, that our young gentlemen would more frequently employ their talents in the cultivation of such a pleasing and elegant art.

This clever, detailed editorial note helps centralise Burns's print legacy in Glasgow, rather than Edinburgh or London, while treating any morally questionable material as mere remnants of a distant age (four short years after his death). The Contents pages (pp. [3]-4) tellingly lack any page number references, but rather list seven items contained within, as follows [only the first title in each number is shown]:

- No. 1 | *Jolly Beggars*
- No. 2 | *The Kirk's Alarm*
- No. 3 | *Holy Willie's Prayer*
- No. 4 | *Extempore Verses on Dining with Lord Daer*
- No. 5 | *The Inventory*
- No. 6 | *Henpeck'd Husband*
- No. 7 | *The Passage of Mount St. Gothard*

To put it simply, *The Poetical Miscellany* is made up of the seven chapbooks published by Stewart and Meikle in 1799, omitting the *Unco Mournfu Tale* published in 1796. It makes complete sense that once each of these seven chapbooks were in circulation, they would simply gather them under a new title and sell them together. As Sandro Jung has shown, the frontispiece for *The Poetical Miscellany*, showing a satyr and nymph crowning a portrait of Burns with a wreath of bays, is strikingly similar to the frontispiece used in Stewart and Meikle's *Poems*

of Allan Ramsay (1797).⁸ As it happens, Ramsay serves as an excellent example of an earlier bibliographical case study not unlike Burns's *Poetical Miscellany*.

Allan Ramsay's *Poems* (1721) were printed in Edinburgh by Thomas Ruddiman (1674–1757). This edition consisted of around 380 pages-worth of poems and songs, many of which had been in circulation in chapbooks and broadsides for some years. However, many libraries hold a 1720 'edition' of Ramsay's *Poems*, bearing a seemingly authentic title-page and the same printing devices and decorations used by Ruddiman in the 1721 edition. Beyond the 1720 title-page, however, the book is comprised of recycled title-pages for individual works previously, or in some cases *subsequently*, printed.⁹ This 1720 Ramsay also varies from copy to copy, less an edition than it is a Frankenstein of other chapbooks. The intended order is there, but its bibliographical makeup is worthy of another study entirely.

Stewart and Meikle's *Poetical Miscellany* is a similar, if less extreme, case. First of all there is no hiding the very recent history of their chapbooks. In the Contents page they note that 'Any of the above Numbers may be had separately at 2d. each.' However, reading this specific note is dependent on which copy is consulted. Both the National Library of Scotland (NLS) and the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum (RBBM) copies carry this note, and an engraving of two doves below it. The copy held at the University of British Columbia (UBC), however, reads [emphasis added]: 'Any of the above Numbers may be had separately at 2d. each; and the whole stitched, price 1s.' This is not the only variant in the title-page. No. 1 in both the NLS and RBBM copies is listed as: 'The Jolly Beggars, a Cantata, by Burns.' But in the UBC copy three more items are listed as part of No. 1: 'Lines of Wrangling'; 'The Gentleman's Wish'; 'The Lady's Choice.' And so it goes, as follows, throughout the rest of the Contents list [full titles shortened]:

NLS¹⁰ & RBBM¹¹

No. 2 The Kirk's Alarm
 Poetical Letter to a Taylor
 Epitaph on John Dow
 De'il's awa wi' the Exciseman
 The Twa Herds, an unco mournfu' tale

No. 3 Holy Willie's Prayer
 Poetical Letter to John Gowdie
 Duncan Gray
 A Man's a Man for a' that
 Now westlin' winds
 I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen

UBC¹²

The Kirk's Alarm
 Epistle from a Taylor
 Epitaph on John Dove
 De'il's awa wi' the Exciseman
 The Holy Toolzie: an unco mournfu' Tale
 Holy Willie's Epitaph

Holy Willie's Prayer
 Letter to John Gowdie
 Duncan Gray
 A Man's a Man for a' that
 Now westlin' winds
 I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen
 Two Epigrams

⁸ Sandro Jung, *The Publishing and Marketing of Illustrated Literature in Scotland, 1760-1825* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 2018), 113–4. Cf. Sandro Jung, 'The Glasgow Poetry Chapbook, 1796–1799: Brash and Reid's 'Small Selections', Cameron and Murdoch's 'most celebrated Pieces, both Scots and English', Murdoch's *The Polyhymnia* and the Stewart and Meikle Burns Chapbooks', *Journal of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society* (2017): 87–107.

⁹ The NLS Glen 106 copy bears the title-page (Edinburgh: 1720), but, rather than being a single issue, in fact contains *The Morning Interview* (1721); *Tartana* (1721); and even a 1722 *Chris's-Kirk on the Green*.

¹⁰ NLS F.7.f.31(1)

¹¹ RBBM 3.313

¹² UBC PR4303 .A3 1800

No. 4	Extempore Verses [...] Lord Daer Dominie Depos'd, part first, by W. Forbes	Extempore Verses [...] Lord Daer Dominie Depos'd, part first, by W. Forbes
No. 5	The Inventory, a letter to R—A— Dominie Depos'd, part second, by W. Forbes Lines on the Palace of Scone The Comforts of Matrimony Plundered Lark Address to a Lily	The Inventory, a letter to R—A— Lines on the Palace of Scone Dominie Depos'd, part second, by W. Forbes The Comforts of Matrimony Plundered Lark Address to a Lily
No. 6	Henpeck'd Husband Address to his Illegitimate Child Epigram Epigram, on [...] death of Thomas Paine Kissing Dancing Stanzas to [...] Burns, by Edward Rushton Humanity's Power The Wounded Hussar, by T. Campbell The Galley Slave The Sailor's Journal Willy and Nelly	Henpeck'd Husband Address to his Illegitimate Child Epigram Epigram, on [...] death of Thomas Paine Kissing Dancing Stanzas to [...] Burns, by Edward Rushton Humanity's Power The Wounded Hussar, by T. Campbell The Galley Slave The Sailor's Journal Willy and Nelly
No. 7	The Passage [...] by Dutchess of Devonshire The Chevalier's Lament The Lass of Gowrie Shelah O'Neil Last May a braw wooer Epitaph on a Wag in Mauchline An original Song [...] Cowl Club, Glasgow Corin's Profession, by Peter Pindar	The Passage [...] by Dutchess of Devonshire The Chevalier's Lament Last May a braw wooer Song on Miss Peggy K— The banks of the Devon Epitaph on a Wag in Mauchline The Lass of Gowrie Shelah O'Neil An original Song [...] Cowl Club, Glasgow Corin's Profession, by Peter Pindar

At the moment, this would indicate that there were at least two separate printings of the prelims for *The Poetical Miscellany*, suggesting that there were at least two separate issues in that form, or perhaps even that the collected form of the chapbooks were done as needed over a period of time, not as a single publication event or events. As this essay will go on to show, however, there are many more minutiae to consider which ultimately makes it difficult to treat the work as an 'edition' at all. In his *Bibliography* Egerer acknowledges that *The Poetical Miscellany* 'is the form in which [the seven chapbooks of 1799] were gathered and reissued. It does not agree with the collations of the original issues, and evidently was reset and reprinted.'¹³ The misleading description here is 'original issues.' On first reading the statement is obvious enough: some of the individual works in *The Poetical Miscellany* vary from their first setting because they were reset for this new collected edition. But in going back over Egerer's description of those 'original issues' the situation becomes even more confusing. Number 5, *The Inventory*, is described as having a variant title page. In the 'original', the colophon reads 'Glasgow, | Printed by Chapman and Lang, | for STEWART & MEIKLE.' while the variant reads 'Glasgow, | Printed by Chapman and Lang, Trongate, | for STEWART & MEIKLE.'¹⁴ None of the other six chapbooks of 1799 are noted as having a variant title-page by Egerer, but readers will assume that there must be more than one if *The Poetical Miscellany* is alleged to have been 'reset and reprinted.' And indeed

¹³ Egerer, 68.

¹⁴ Egerer, 63.

there are. Collating these was never Egerer's aim, but in describing the first instance of each number as 'original issues' implies that they were reset once (except for *The Inventory*) for *The Poetical Miscellany*. This in turn gives it credence as a functioning edition, which it is not. Indeed, we need to turn back to the separate editions and track just how many variants there are. Only then, with that knowledge, can we determine the true nature of *The Poetical Miscellany*.

In the case of *The Jolly Beggars: a Cantata*, there are at least three variant issues. There are also at least three variant issues of *The Kirk's Alarm*, and at least two variant issues of *Holy Willie's Prayer*,¹⁵ *Extempore Verses on Dining with Lord Daer*, and *The Inventory*. This last is the only Stewart & Meikle chapbooks for which Egerer notes a variant title-page, outside the variant versions of *The Poetical Miscellany*. Before we look into the tell-tale variants in detail it is worth illustrating the four chief engravings that help identify similarly titled copies across these seven numbers [Fig. 1].

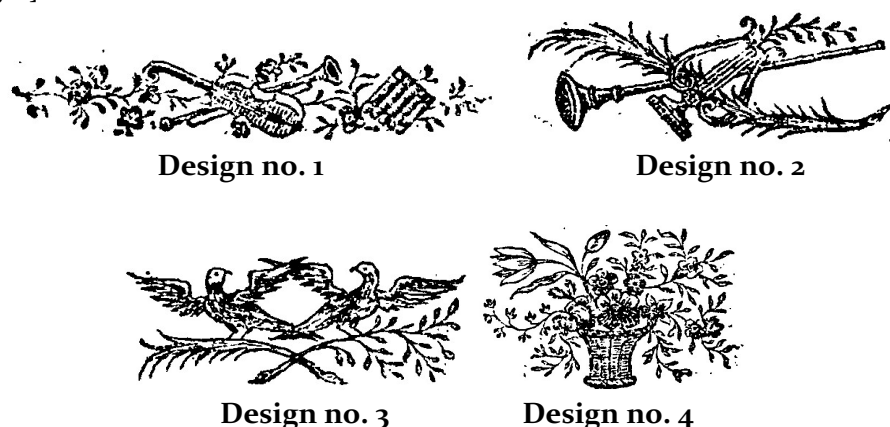


Fig. 1. Decorative designs printed in the Stewart and Meikle chapbooks.

The following five tables show the exact variants used to identify separate printings. For each chapbook, the variant printings so far identified are assigned letters (a), (b), or (c); for convenience, the headnote for each item indicates the copies examined matching each printing. As there are not many complete copies of *The Poetical Miscellany* extant, many of the copies are held individually, or as part of other chapbook collections. Where an asterisk appears beside a shelfmark it is to indicate that that copy is bound as part of *The Poetical Miscellany*.

Key for shelfmarks:

- BL** British Library
- GU** University of Glasgow Library
- NLS** National Library of Scotland
- RBBM** Robert Burns Birthplace Museum
- UBC** University of British Columbia
- USC** University of South Carolina

¹⁵ Not to be confused with the two chapbooks titled *The Prayer of Holy Willie*, first in Kilmarnock by John Wilson (printer of Burns's debut collection, 1789) and secondly in Edinburgh in 1799, this time with Burns's name on the title-page.

Table 1. Variants across three issues of *The Jolly Beggars* (Egerer 39).

Variant [a]: USC RBSC Rare PR .4311 .A1 1799 S.L (3); NLS RB.s.445. **Variant [b]:** GU Sp. Col. Bh12-f.42 (1); NLS F.7.f.31(1)*; UBC PR4303 .A3 1800*. **Variant [c]:** BL RB.23.a.10129*; NLS L.C. 2398 (36); ML 311291; ML 52713*; RBBM 3.313*.

Title-page text

[a] *The Jolly Beggars: A Cantata.*

[b, c] *The Jolly Beggars; or, Tatterdemallions.
A Cantata.*

p. 2

[a] blank

[b, c] 'The Jolly Beggars: A Cantata.'

Title-page illustration

[a] Design 1

[b] Design 2

[c] Design 1

p. 14¹⁶

[a] n/a

[b] Design 3

[c] Design 4

Title-page colophon

[a] Printed for and Sold by Stewart & Meikle

[b] Printed by Chapman and Lang, For
Stewart & Meikle

[c] Printed by Chapman & Lang, Trongate For
Stewart & Meikle

p. 16

[a] Advertisement

[b] 'The Gentleman's Wish'

[c] 'The Wish'

Table 2. Variants across three issues of *The Kirk's Alarm* (Egerer 40).

Variant [a]: RBBM 3.313*; USC RBSC Rare PR 4311 .A1 1799 S.L. (2); NLS RB.s.445 (3); USC RBSC Rare PR 4312 .K5 1799 S.L. **Variant [b]:** GU Sp. Col. Bh12-f.42 (2); UBC PR4303 .A3 1801; ML52713*; UBC PR4303 .A3 1800*; **Variant [c]:** NLS L.C. 2398 (38); NLS F.7.f.31(1)*; BL RB.23.a.10129*.

Colophon

[a] Printed for and Sold by Stewart & Meikle

[b] Printed by Chapman and Lang, For
Thomas Stewart, Bookseller and Stationer.

[c] Printed by Chapman & Lang, For Stewart
& Meikle

[c] diamond rule

p. 5

[a] decorative rule

[b] double rule

[c] decorative rule

p. 12

[a] diamond rule | 'An Unco Mournfu' Tale.'

[b] double rule | 'The Holy Toolzie: An Unco
Mournfu' Tale.'

[c] decorative rule | 'An Unco Mournfu' Tale.'

p. 10

[a] decorative rule

[b] double rule

p. 16

[a] Advertisement for *The Jolly Beggars* and
Holy Willy's [sic] *Prayer*

[b] 'Epitaph on Holy Willie' | Advertisement
for *Poems, Ascribed to Robert Burns*

[c] Advertisement for 'Posthumous Pieces by
Robert Burns'

Table 3. Variants across two issues of *Holy Willie's Prayer* (Egerer 41).

Variant [a]: USC RBSC Rare PR 4311 .A1 1799 S.L. (1); BL RB.23.a.10129*; ML 311293; RBBM 3.313*. **Variant [b]:** GU Sp. Col. Bh12-f.42 (3); UBC PR4303 .A3 1800a; NLS F.7.f.31(1)* [6]; NLS L.C. 2398 (37); ML 52713*; UBC PR4303 .A3 1800*

Title-page illustration

[a] Design 2

¹⁶ Confusingly, the NLS copy of *The Poetical Miscellany*, shelfmark F.7.f.31(1), contains a pasted engraving from an unidentified source over the two doves, ie. Design 3 (which can nonetheless be seen when the leaf is held against light).

[b] Design 3

[a] decorative rule

[b] double rule

Title-page colophon

[a] Printed for and Sold by Stewart & Meikle.

[b] Printed by Chapman and Lang, For Stewart & Meikle.

p. 12

p. 16

[a] decorative rule | Advertisement for previous and upcoming issues

[b] diamond rule | 'The Rake'

Table 4. Variants across two issues of *Extempore Verses on Dining with Lord Daer* (Egerer 42). Variant [a] GU Sp. Col. Bh12-f.42(4); NLS L.C. 2398 (39); UBC PR4303 .A3 1799a V. 5; BL RB.23.a.10129*; NLS L.C. 2398(39); ML 311294; ML 52713*; RBBM 3.313*; UBC PR4303 .A3 1800*. **Variant [b]:** NLS F.7.f.31(1)*.

Title-page illustration

[a] Design 2

[b] Design 1

Title-page colophon

[a] Printed for and Sold by Stewart & Meikle.

[b] Printed by Chapman and Lang, For Stewart & Meikle.

p. 16

[a] diamond rule | Advertisement for Part II of *The Dominie Depos'd*

[b] 'finis' scroll vignette

Table 5. Variants across two issues of *The Inventory* (Egerer 43).

Variant [a]: BL RB.23.a.10129*; GU Sp. Col. Bh12-f.42 (5); ML 52713*; RBBM 3.313*; USC RBSC Rare PR 4310 .I5 S.L.; UBC PR4303 .A3 1800*. **Variant [b]:** NLS L.C. 2398 (40); NLS F.7.f.31(1)*; UBC PR4303 .A3 1799a V. 6; ML 311292.

Colophon

[a] Printed by Chapman and Lang, Trongate, For Stewart & Meikle.

[b] Printed by Chapman and Lang, For Stewart & Meikle.

'The Dominie Depos'd'

[a] begins at p. 2

[b] begins at p. 6

'The Inventory'

[a] begins at p. 8

[b] begins at p. 2

p. 2

[a] 'The Dominie Depos'd'

[b] 'The Inventory'

p. 10 [a]/ p. 4 [b]

[a] 'Lines Written with a pencil on the Wall of one of the Apartments of the Palace of Scone, July 1799.'

[b] Lines Written with a pencil on the Wall of one of the Apartments of the Palace of Scone, July 1799, By a Gentleman of Glasgow.'

p. 11

[a] Design 2

[b] Design 4

p. 16

[a] Advertisement for previous issues

[b] No advertisement

There are no extant variant issues of numbers 6 (*The Henpeck'd Husband*) or 7 (*The Passage of Mount St. Gothard*), meaning that either they were printed only once, or that variant issues are simply lost. The first scenario makes sense theoretically, because it is reasonable to assume that by the time Stewart and Meikle had commenced printing these last two numbers they had begun planning for *The Poetical Miscellany*, and so had them printed to suit that volume without the need to reset them. But the only evidence that this may be the case is the lack of a variant issue for either, which may yet turn up. There is, however, one last problem in this assumption. Going back to the Contents pages, above, we see that both lists for *The Henpeck'd Husband* are identical, giving weight to the theory that the publishers had finally settled on the idea of gathering up the chapbooks as one. However, neither list conforms to the actual contents of *The Passage of Mount St. Gothard*, as Table 6 shows:

Table 6. Tabulated contents lists (first two columns) of the two variant Contents pages set for *The Poetical Miscellany* and (in the third column) the contents of *The Passage of Mount St. Gothard* as they appear.

Variant 1 (NLS F. 7.f.31(1)/ RBBM 3.313)	Variant 2 (UBC PR4303 .A3 1800)	Contents of the edition
The Passage of Mount St. Gothard;	The Passage of Mount St. Gothard;	The Passage of Mount St. Gothard (p. 2)
The Chevalier's Lament;	The Chevalier's Lament;	The Chevalier's Lament (p. 7)
The Lass of Gowrie;	Last May a brow wooer;	The Lass of Gowrie (p. 8)
Shelah O'Neil;	Song on Miss Peggy K—;	Song on Miss Peggy K— (p. 9)
Last May a brow wooer;	The banks of Devon;	Shelah O'Neil (p. 11)
Epitaph on a Wage in Mauchline;	Epitaph on a Wag in Mauchline;	Last May a brow wooer (p. 12)
An original Song;	The Lass of Gowrie;	Epitaph on a Wag in Mauchline (p. 13)
Corin's Profession;	Shelah O'Neil;	An original Song (p. 14)
	An original Song;	Corin's Profession (p. 15)
	Corin's Profession;	The banks of Devon (p. 16)

Given that neither printed list describes accurately the contents of that chapbook, or at least the extant copies we have, we are forced to ponder once more the possibility of lost variant issues. That both listings for *The Henpeck'd Husband* are identical, above, offers the alternate possibility that these printed lists for *The Passage of Mount St. Gothard* were simply erroneous. This is more likely, as, after all, the listings for the other issues do not line up exactly.

Firstly, two of these seven chapbooks were set three times. Second, neither contents list for *The Inventory* matches either of the variant issues. And finally, the titles given in the contents list often differ from the titles previously printed. For instance, one contents list prints 'John Dow', the other 'Dove', and, more tellingly, one list prints the title 'The Twa Herds' and the other 'The Holy Toolzie'. If we look at Table 2, page 12, it reveals that none of the three variants actually carry the title 'The Twa Herds.' We do find this alternate title for 'The Holy Toolzie' in several other editions of Burns in 1801, including Thomas Stewart's *Poems Ascribed to Robert Burns*, the opening 60 or so pages of which actually comprise the material across his chapbook series with Meikle. In other words, both contents lists are unstable and unreliable afterthoughts, tacked on to a series of gathered chapbooks and sold as a new collected work.

None of the copies of *The Poetical Miscellany* available for this study have proved to be identical. We should therefore begin to treat the contents of it, *ie.* the individual, gathered

chapbooks as extant copies that were printed individually. These seven chapbooks are (small) editions in their own right. *The Poetical Miscellany*, on the other hand, is not. While there is no evidence to suggest it should be referred to as an 'edition' it is nonetheless helpful that libraries and collectors continue to treat the title based on its intended use. Traditional accounts of the unauthorized Glasgow editions in which much of Burns's reserved canon first reached print greatly oversimplify the bibliographical complexity of their printing history. Neglecting this complexity, and ignoring how often a given chapbook had to be reprinted in a relatively short period, shortchanges popular enthusiasm for Burns, especially in Glasgow and the West of Scotland, and underplays the rapidity with which, after Burns's death, poems came into circulation that his trustees, editor, and publishers excluded from the authorized editions for years to come.